

SHAPING THE WAY WE TEACH ENGLISH

Challenges, Suggestions, and Solutions From Cairo Brainstorming Session

1. CHALLENGE	SUGGESTION SOLUTIONS
That's a great idea (doing a play with props/costumes) (having learning stations) ... but we don't have resources like those shown on the video.	◆ Have students bring props from home or make them in class. ◆ Be creative! Improvise! It really motivates learners ◆ Use household items. ◆ You can use their environment or contact various local organizations (embassies, AMIDEAST, museums, travel agents) ◆ Use what you have; recycle ◆

2. CHALLENGE	SUGGESTION SOLUTIONS
Critical thinking can be considered rude in some cultures so it's not taught Teaching critical thinking will disrupt the status quo	◆ Role play: have them speak their thoughts through the voice of someone (something else). Talking bear for example ◆ They need to believe their opinions will remain in the classroom (not be used against them. Need to trust their teacher) ◆ Do not tell that it is critical thinking. Just do the task. Tell Sts that we all make mistakes; we learn from each other. ◆ There is no person who doesn't think, analyze, clarify things just design appropriate tasks and choose appropriate topics. Use the culture of that country in your lessons, using

	<p>critical thinking. (Quite right! Have examples)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ first lead Sts to apply “critical thinking” to things they already think need to change. Then later indirectly they can apply it to their own assignments. ◆ Teach them to criticize idea, no people ◆ Use critical thinking to talk about your own culture first to pave the path and who it's ok to do. ◆
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3. CHALLENGE	SUGGESTION SOLUTIONS
Teachers themselves are not confident in their English ability to stay in English in the classroom or to do any activities beyond the textbook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Enroll in/attend sessions conducted by native speakers ◆ Read a lot (join a bookclub - even online!) ◆ Subscribe to newspapers/magazines ◆ Work with peers on project ◆ start teacher conversation clubs and reading circles ◆ Use audio-visual materials (Shaping) ◆ Do peer observations ◆ Participate in synchronous online communication platforms ◆

4. CHALLENGE	SUGGESTION SOLUTIONS
<p>My students are not motivated to learn English; it's compulsory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Sometimes we can be too sympathetic. If they have to pass, they have to study. ◆ Use a reward system: work X amount of days, get one lesson on something they pick ◆ Bring interesting topics, discussions, activities, and contextualize your classes. They will not even notice they are learning English. 😊 ◆ Extra curricular activities: English club, drama, poetry corner, reading club, debate tournament,; use more authentic materials and realia in your lessons, they will be brought by students. ◆ Participate in IEARN project, have pen pals ◆ Encourage them. ◆ Raise awareness as to the importance of learning/speaking English (International Language etc.) ◆ Games and role play activities that include fun will help ◆ Use internet activities (webquests etc.) ◆ use popular music (a common authentic source of English) ◆ Choose materials that motivates them (or let them choose it) ◆ Use incentives ◆ Choose motivating activities that cater for students' different learning styles and multiple intelligences. ◆

5. CHALLENGE	SUGGESTION SOLUTIONS
<p>Using Peer Correction in the classroom can seem to students (and parents) that the teacher is not doing his/her job.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Only the first step. ◆ Teacher gives correction, too. ◆ Talk to parents, students about it. ◆ Not if done in a friendly environment. ◆ If teacher does this more often I think the parents and students will be used to it. ◆ Do it in class so parents don't see it as homework; swap papers so it doesn't seem like one on one grading. ◆ Show both parents and students the value of doing such a thing - let them know WHY (yes, the learning value involved) ◆

6. CHALLENGE	SUGGESTION SOLUTIONS
<p>Role plays don't work in mixed ability classes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Let's not label students. Let them decide how much challenge they want to tackle. ◆ Always require an 'outcome' apart from the "goal" (goal being speaking/acting). Also have time requirement. ◆ Roles can be adapted to suit students' ability by using prompts, minimizing the roles. ◆ Give weak students small roles. Let the strong students. ◆ Use 'choruses" (several students saying the same thing in unison) ◆ Roles should go hand in hand with students lge level but each one should be given a role no matter how

	<p>small it is.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Let learners choose their roles (but make sure there are more roles than students so someone isn't forced into a role by default) ◆
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7. CHALLENGE	SUGGESTION SOLUTIONS
My class is too big for pair/group work and/or the seats are fixed to the floor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Actually the teacher can make sts work in groups as this could cut down the amount of correction. Sts can sit on the tables or face each other. It is possible and I'm sure it would be for Sts and the teacher. ◆ Ask Sts to stand up and organize your group work. ◆ No class is too big for pair/group work you just need the systems in place to make it happen from the beginning. ◆ Have sts assigned to groups at beginning, then they just turn around and face their group mates. ◆ Make sure the task is clearly defined; not too long, and doesn't require a lot of moving around. ◆ Have all students prepare a role play in pairs the teacher randomly chooses a pair to present in front of the class. ◆ Why can't students just turn to their neighbors in front/behind and next to them and then rearrange seating of whole class each week or so. ◆ If you can change the venue, let sts work in the library or in the yard

	of the school. ◆
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8. CHALLENGE	SUGGESTION SOLUTIONS
Authentic materials have a cultural bias, unnecessary vocabulary and it's difficult to find age level appropriate materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Language is a vehicle for culture. We shouldn't divorce one from the other. ◆ Modify it to fit culture. ◆ Unnecessary vocabulary can be used in nifty interactive vocabulary tasks. ◆ Try the internet ◆ You don't have to teach all the vocabulary, especially in reading tasks (reading from context) ◆ Select suitable materials. ◆ Adapt authentic materials to your learners' level ◆ Be selective; think about your environment. ◆ skip parts; not necessary to cover ALL material ◆ Adapt activity rather than reading. ◆

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10. CHALLENGE	SUGGESTION SOLUTIONS
Some groups finish earlier than others and then make noise or disrupt others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assign another small task (word search) ◆ Create a reward system. ◆ The groups that finish early can monitor/help other groups. ◆ Make the last activity 'open' so that students can always stay busy ◆ A 'self-access' library/cart/shelf would help. The students who finish early could do something from there. ◆ Make (create) learning stations or lab. ◆